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IN MEMORIAM.

Wrightson. Mem.

An earnest desire has been expressed by many, that a memoir of the exceedingly busy and fruitful life of the compiler of these Memorials be published.

While this request may not be granted at present, at least, (though certain extracts from her journals and correspondence *may* be printed somewhat later) it does seem proper that a brief statement of one or two suggestive facts be appended to this, the last work of her life.

Mrs. Anna Elvira (Wright) Mathews, was born at her father's country home, Billerica, Mass., April 25, 1851, her father being a Congregational Deacon, and her mother having united with the Old South Church, Boston, under Dr. Wisner 1827. Of such godly parentage, and reared amid the atmosphere of a distinctively Christian home, she was converted to God, and united with the church when fourteen years of age.

Educated chiefly in the public schools of Boston, she took high rank in her studies from the first. Girl's High and Normal, 1869.

Married on her nineteenth birthday, she, with her husband, spent a year abroad in further study and travel. Following this a year or two more of study amid the classic atmosphere of Andover Hill; the busy wife of a plain minister of Jesus Christ for sixteen years; went Home, July 7, 1886, aged thirty-five years, two months, and twelve days; having been confined to her bed by a peculiarly dreadful and distressing illness for nearly the last three and a half years of her earthly life. Such the brief outline.

Her Intellectual life was vigorous, both as to acquisitive faculties, and logical processes. An omnivorous reader in many departments, her memory was almost phenomenal. She *seemed* to remember *everything* which she had *ever* known, whether facts, faces, or whatnot. Intellectual work seemed a necessity of her being, and often, when worn out physically by the domestic and parish duties of the day, she would tuck the children safely away, in bed, and then recuperate upon a few chapters of something like, Watts on the Mind, Young's Night Thoughts, or Edwards on the Affections, or, the Will, all special favorites with her.

A single entry in her journal, chosen almost at random, from many similar ones, illustrates this trait. The real significance of the entry can be appreciated only as it is taken in connection with the *press* of duties, and her delicate state of health at the time. The record of the previous day speaks of "a dreadful headache and toothache all the afternoon *and all night*. Retired at seven o'clock, but did not rest well," etc. Then follows the entry for the next day, in which she says that, "in forenoon" (in addition to her household duties) "wrote an article upon, The Women of Japan, for reading Sunday night,"—at a missionary meeting!

While sick in bed with her last illness, a letter reached her from the antiquarian, Mr. W. K. Wright, of Northampton, Mass. In attempting to answer his genealogical inquiry she was led, from motives of courtesy, to certain investigations which excited in her mind a renewed interest in her family history; led to a vast amount of correspondence; then to certain memoranda for personal reference; and at length to the present monograph. The amount of work involved was far more than would seem possible to one unfamiliar with genealogical research, and was performed in a state of health which not only confined her to her bed, but which often brought days and *weeks*, during which extreme weakness would prevent even the writing of a few lines. Indeed the writing of the Memorials and the enormous correspondence involved, was largely performed thus a few lines at a time, from first to last. At the very last, when too weak to hold a pen, she allowed a member of the family to act as her amanuensis.

She corrected the last of the printer's proof herself a few days before her death.

A long and unexpected delay of the mss. in the printer's hands not only inconvenienced her greatly, but nearly deprived her of the privilege of seeing her work in print, the first twenty-five copies being received only a week before she was in the embrace of death. (This accounts for the delay in filling orders for the book long since received).

Her Spiritual life was even more marked than her intellectual. Her union with Christ was intimate and vital. She illustrated the truth, that "perfect love casteth out fear." Regular seasons were ever observed *during the day* for secret prayer and the study of the Word of God. These were her *feast times*. Possessed of great spiritual insight, and thoroughly *in love* with her Bible, her comments upon various passages were exceedingly suggestive and helpful, while much of her ordinary correspondence with her husband, during occasional separations, reads almost like passages from the diary of Mrs. President Edwards.

After an acquaintance of nearly twenty years, and having been her husband sixteen years, the facts compel the statement by the writer of these words, that she was the most perfect exemplification of the graces of the Spirit that he has ever known.

Yet she was no ascetic, with no interest in sublunary affairs. To her thought a love which would not transmute itself into holy deeds was *no love at all*.

Of a highly poetic and spiritual temperament, she yet took an extremely practical view of life, and in all her work, whether intellectual, in the church, or the home, was methodical to the last degree.

The amount of work which she accomplished was simply enormous, though quiet and unassuming her manner, and so perfect her system, that she often impressed those who saw her as having great *leisure*.

She took a particular interest in *many* different things.

Her benefactions, as compared with her means, were extremely large. If it were proper, many instances of rare pathos could be repeated, illustrative of this trait. Her delight was in the homes of the poor, and the unchurched, where much of her time was spent.

It having been the sore disappointment of her life, that God had seemed to so hedge up the way as to thwart the long-cherished intention of herself and husband to become foreign missionaries, she was accustomed to seek out with great eagerness such "heathen" as might be within reach of her own doors. Though accustomed to distribute material comforts as God enabled her, the great (though often concealed) object of her visits was to *preach Christ*. This was *always* her favorite theme, and many are the evidences that great numbers have heard her gladly and been helped.

She was a careful Student of Art. Sept. 3, 1881, speaks of a visit to one of the large picture galleries. "It seemed *such a treat* to see some nice pictures after three months absence from Boston."

During her last sickness, while confined to her bed, she conceived a Chronological Life of Christ in Art. Extended courses of study of the great masterpieces of sacred art, supplemented by the careful *study* of a large number of Lives of Christ, resulted in a chronologically arranged and catalogued collection of *several hundred* photographic copies of the most famous paintings illustrative of the story of the Incarnation.

In her journal (which covers a period of nearly twenty years) she writes Feb. 3, 1881, in the midst of a *very* busy period, "Visited schools today. Was *very* much interested in the present methods of teaching."

She read the daily papers to the very last Saturday of her life. To her

the daily "news" meant so many tidings of the coming of the King; the noise of battle or of great political or commercial changes, were to her merely the rumble of *His* chariot wheels.

She was a fine organizer; a presiding officer of rare grace and dignity; a Sabbath School teacher of great skill and faithfulness; a writer of hymns; a graceful contributor to the public press.

But she shone to the *best* advantage amid the sacred retirement of Home—among those who knew her best. Her life gave to those most familiar with her a new view of *the strength of gentleness, and the gentleness of true strength.*

Somewhat "petite" in person, "of a beautiful countenance," of an extremely retiring nature, coupled with what has often been described as, "a sweet dignity," she was characterized by a peculiar *winsomeness* of manner, which was *invariable* with her.

A slip of paper dated "Sunday P.M., January 7th, 1883," (three and a half years *to a day* prior to her death), contained the hymns, tunes, and Scripture which she desired used at her funeral.

At fourteen minutes past one, Wednesday morning, July 7, 1886, she "fell on sleep."

Peculiarly impressive and memorable funeral services were conducted by the Rev's. E. N. Packard, S. H. Hayes, and L. Dickerman in the Boylston Congregational Meeting House, in the presence of a large, and evidently bereaved, congregation, Friday, July 9, and the precious dust was deposited in the family lot at Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: *and their works do follow them.*

S. Sherberne Mathews.

Boylston Congregational Parsonage,

99 Amory St., J. P., Boston, Sept. 20, 1886.